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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 12 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement issued by the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 11 March 1998 concerning the situation in Kosovo and Metohija.

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, under item 113 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/53/50.

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ANNEX

Statement issued by the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 11 March 1998

At its meeting today, chaired by Prime Minister Dr. Radoje Kontic, the Federal Government considered the statement of the Ministerial Meeting of the Contact Group held in London on 9 March 1998.

While it appreciates the condemnation of separatism and terrorism in the statement of the Contact Group, the Federal Government does not accept the attempts to internationalize any internal question of the Republic of Serbia or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Federal Government considers that there is no basis for that either in the international legal system or in international practice.

What is at stake is interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign and independent country. The Federal Government points out that terrorism is an evil in Europe and the world and that it is dangerous to apply double standards to it. It is the legitimate right and obligation of every country to oppose energetically the phenomenon of terrorism as a method of achieving political goals. The eradication of terrorism requires a clear, unequivocal condemnation of that evil by all elements, in particular by the responsible forces and leaders of the members of the Albanian national minority.

The Federal Government considers that dealing with purely internal questions of a country at international meetings and threats to introduce measures of pressure constitute a flagrant violation of the international legal system and an attempt to create a precedent with unforeseeable consequences for international relations.

Respecting as it does all human and minority rights and standards established by the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Document 1992 and the Charter of Paris, as well as the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Federal Government considers that these documents provide a framework for the solution of all questions in Kosovo and Metohija through dialogue, by political means, within the constitutional system of the Republic of Serbia.

To that end, the Federal Government fully supports the positions of the Government of the Republic of Serbia presented in its statement of 10 March 1998 (S/1998/225, annex) and the call for an open dialogue aimed at finding solutions to all concrete questions.

The Federal Government also fully supports the policy, measures and efforts of the Republic of Serbia aimed at achieving stable social development in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija under the conditions of tolerance and the full equality of all citizens, irrespective of nationality and religious affiliation, which is the basis of every democratic, multi-ethnic society.

The Federal Government confirms also on this occasion its readiness to cooperate with the international community on the basis of full equality, with respect for the legitimate interests, sovereignty, territorial integrity and the constitutional and legal system of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in accordance with the international legal system.

The Federal Government calls upon all responsible international actors to refrain from all steps or acts which lend encouragement to the separatist elements in Kosovo and Metohija, in particular from taking any unfounded measures contrary to the recognized constructive policy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a constituent of lasting peace, stability and good-neighbourliness in this part of Europe.